

Dear P.

Thank God I've got away from the Base, and am up here where things are going on - etherizing and going over chests etc. There's no comparison whatever between the fetid closeness off 22 General's inactivity and this type of gypsy life - we move on the 29th August to follow up our advance - and as long as I can I'm sticking to it.

I've just come back from the admitting tents. Eight exhausted Bosch lying on stretchers 1 inch off the hard pounded dirt of the tent; their eyes terror struck watch you in the half dark. One furthest away lies on his side, his entire back naked except for a well soaked bandage about his hips - utterly without hope, careless of the cold damp air. "Wohin kommst du" I asked - "Posen" he returned - and then scanning me as if all his world depended on me he gasped, "Gehe ich nach England?" "Vielleicht - das glaub ich wohl" I said, rather curious at his question. "Gut" he whispered to himself, "England ist gut."

You will never see a human soul so naked as these German boys jolted into the enemy's operating theatre. They all have the dumb simplicity - epic and unforgettable - that statues are made in memory of, in hopes of suggesting. Oh God, you should see an 18 year old pale Saxon staring at an amputation being done, and begging me to tell him if his leg must be cut off. I saw it awry, sticking out of the bucket, ten minutes after I had told him "Nein" - he had ten minutes more of half satisfaction and I wouldn't have amputated

All night long you hear our planes droning over to raise hell in Germany.* Barrage etc., etc. There's quite a bit of war on!

* or day break patrols

We've had hundreds of German wounded - their coats stuck sometimes with ~~buttons~~ ~~buttons~~ safety pins because everyone wants buttons. I am collecting my bits here and there. I got a postcard, which I didn't keep, in one's pocket book today - a picture of a woman knitting by candle light alone - labelled Einsam.

A.G.